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Message Text

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43
ACTION AGR-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 EB-11 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 DRC-01 /089 W
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R 070830Z DEC 73
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7343
INFO USDOC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, ETRD, BU, US
SUBJECT: US AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT TRADE MISSION RECEIVED AT HIGH LEVELS BY GOB

REF: SOFIA 1657 AND 1602

VIENNA FOR EWTC

1. SUMMARY. GOB OFFICIALS MADE NO SECRET OF THEIR HOPE THAT RED CARPET TREATMENT FOR TRADE MISSION WOULD BE TAKEN AS SIGN OF BULGARIA'S WILLINGNESS TO EXPAND TRADE WITH US, AS WELL AS EVIDENCE OF THEIR DESIRE TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS ACROSS THE BOARD. MISSION MEMBERS SHARE EMBASSY VIEW THAT BULGARIAN RECEPTION WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL, WELL ORGANIZED SHOW TO PRESENT BULGARIA AS POTENTIALLY LARGE MARKET FOR US AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. BULGARIAN RECEPTION OF US TRADE MISSION WAS AN INTERESTING EXAMPLE OF HOW CENTRALLY CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT CAN QUICKLY PULL OUT ALL STOPS TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION. AS LATE AS LAST WEEK OF NOVEMBER, TRADE
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DELEGATION WAS TO BE HANDLED BY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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AND VISITS RESTRICTED TO MIDDLE LEVELS FOREIGN TRADE APPARAT. SHORTLY BEFORE MISSION ARRIVAL EMBASSY INFORMED THAT SCHEDULE HAD BEEN ALTERED TO ALLOW MEETINGS WITH FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER FOREIGN TRADE LUKANOV, DEPUTY PREMIER AND POLITBURO MEMBER IVAN POPOV, AS WELL AS MINISTER OF MACHINE BUILDING AND RANKING OFFICIALS MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE. IN ADDITION, CHIEFS OF ALL LEADING FOREIGN TRADE ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSED "STRONG DESIRE" TO HOLD INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH MISSION MEMBERS.

3. THROUGHOUT THESE HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS BULGARIAN SIDE STRESSED NEED TO COOPERATE IN ECONOMIC AND TRADE MATTERS, WITH PARTICULAR STRESS ON OPPORTUNITY FOR US AGRICULTURE TO SELL TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT IN BULGARIA.

4. ALL LEVELS ECHOED POPOV'S STATEMENT THAT "GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS IN RECENT MONTHS NOW MADE POSSIBLE A BROAD IMPROVEMENT IN TRADE AND OTHER RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND BULGARIA". POPOV WELCOMED THIS CHANGE WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN AIDED BY EFFORTS OF US GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY. AS RESULT, POPOV CONCLUDED, BULGARIA WAS NOW TAKING CONCRETE STEPS TO CONTACT US BUSINESS IN MANY FIELDS.

5. MFA OFFICIAL SAID THAT DECISION TO PROVIDE MISSION ACCESS TO HIGH LEVELS HAD BEEN TAKEN AS A MEANS OF DEMONSTRABCNG "NEW ATMOSPHERE" ON BILATERAL RELATIONS. DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE SAID THAT DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN AT "VERY HIGH LEVELS" AND HINTED THAT PRIME MINISTER TODOROV HAD GIVEN FINAL APPROVAL. HEAD OF ONE FOREIGN TRADE ORGANIZATION REMARKED THAT IT HAD BEEN A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR HIM TO BE TOLD TO POSTPONE MEETING WITH SOVIET GROUP IN ORDER TO MEET WITH US BUSINESSMEN.

6. COMMENT: MISSION'S ARRIVAL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING BCP PLENUM ON AGRICULTURE WAS PROPITIOUS. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT STUDIED PLENUM SPEECHES IN DEPTH, IT WAS CLEAR FROM OFFICIAL COMMENTS THAT BULGARIA HAD MADE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPORTANT DECISION TO BOST AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF WESTERN TECHNOLOGY. LUKANOV SAIBOFE FOR EXAMPLE, THAT PLENUM HAD DECIDED TO INVEST 3-5 BILLION DOLLARS IN 5 TO 10 YEARS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE "MOST HIGHLY DEVELOPED AGRICULTURE IN WORLD" BY 1990. SINCE US NOW POSSESSED WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED AGRICULTURE, US CAN CONTRIBUTE TO BULGARIAN GOAL OF OBTAINING TECHNOLOGY AND MACHINERY. FOREIGN TRADE OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED

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IMPORTANCE OF "INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION" AS OPPOSED
TO DIRECT SALES, BUT MISSION MEMBERS WERE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED
TO FIND GENUINE INTEREST IN THEIR PRODUCTS AND AERE HOPEFUL
THAT FOLLOWUP COULD RESULT IN RELATIVELY QUICK SALES.
LUKANOV TOLD GROUP BULGARIA, FOR EXAMPLE, WILL INCREASE
IMPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY FROM WEST 30 PERCENT IN 1974.

7. IF PLENUM DECISIONS ARE AS SWEEPING AS DESCRIBED
BY RANKING BULGARIAN OFFICIALS IT MAY BE KEY DECISION
FOR FUTURE OF BULGARIAN ECONOMY. IF DECISION IS TO
CONCENTRATE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, IT REPRESENTS
REVERSAL OF DECISIONS OF EARLY 1960'S TO TRY TO COM-
PETE WITH SOCIALIST PARTNERS IN BROAD RANGE OF IN-
DUSTRIAL GOODS, RATHER THAN SERVE AS BREADBASKET FOR
OTHER COUNTRIES. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED, COUPLED
WITH INCREASING WORLD DEMAND FOR FOOD, MAY HAVE ALTERED
THINKING OF TOP LEADERSHIP ON WHERE TO PLACE EMPHASIS
FOR FUTURE GROWTH.
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